

National Popular Election of the President

National Popular Vote!

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"Agreement Among the States to Elect the President by Nationwide Popular Vote"

The National Popular Vote bill (SB290) would guarantee that the presidential candidate who receives the most votes in all 50 states will win the Presidency. This bill is sponsored by Senators Rick Laible and Jesse Laslovich and Representatives Rep. Walter McNutt and Hal Jacobson.

Montana uses the so-called winner-take-all rule that awards all of its electoral votes to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in each state.

The main shortcoming of the current system of electing the President is that presidential candidates have no reason to poll, visit, advertise, organize, campaign, or worry about the concerns of voters of states that they cannot possibly win or lose. Presidential candidates do not poll in Montana, do not visit Montana, and do not need to worry about Montana issues in order to be elected. Voters in two thirds of the states are similarly disenfranchised. Candidates concentrate their attention on a very small handful of closely divided "battleground" states. Presidential candidates concentrate over two-thirds of their advertising money and campaign visits in just five states, and over 99% of their advertising money in just 16 states. The spectator states in presidential elections include 12 of the 13 least populous states (all but New Hampshire); and a majority of the other states.

A second shortcoming of the current system is that a candidate can win the Presidency without winning the most popular votes nationwide. A shift of 60,000 votes in Ohio would have elected Kerry as President—even though President Bush was ahead by 3.5 million votes nationwide in 2004. A shift of a handful of votes in one or two states would have elected the second-place candidate in five of the last 12 presidential elections.

Twelve of 13 smallest states are almost totally ignored in presidential elections because they are politically non-competitive. Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Alaska regularly vote Republican, and Rhode Island, Delaware, Hawaii, Vermont, Maine, and DC regularly vote Democratic. These 12 states together contain 11 million people. Because of the two electoral-vote bonus that each state receives, these 12 non-competitive small states have 40 electoral votes. However, the two-vote bonus is an entirely illusory advantage. Ohio has 11 million people and has "only" 20 electoral votes. As we all know, the 11 million people in Ohio are the center of attention in presidential campaigns, while the 11 million people in the 12 non-competitive small states are utterly irrelevant. Nationwide election of the President would make all of the voters in the 12 smallest states as important as an Ohio voter.

The Founding Fathers gave the states exclusive and plenary (complete) control over the manner of awarding of their electoral votes. The states may change their state laws concerning the awarding of their electoral votes at any time. The winner-take-all rule is not in the U.S. Constitution. It was used by only 3 states in the nation's first presidential election. Maine and Nebraska currently award electoral votes by congressional districts.

Under the National Popular Vote bill, all of the state's electoral votes would be awarded to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The bill would take effect only when enacted, in identical form, by states possessing a majority of the electoral votes—that is, enough electoral votes to elect a President (270 of 538).

70% of the public has long supported nationwide election of the president.